

Cultural Resource Review

WHAT IS CULTURAL RESOURCE REVIEW?

Cultural resource review is the process of identifying historic or archaeologically significant areas that may be impacted by a development project and, if impacts are anticipated, determining a strategy for limiting or mitigating those impacts.

APPLICABILITY

Projects located within the Downtown Tacoma and Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Areas, for which Subarea Plans and Non-project Environmental Impact Statements have been adopted, must complete this process. Currently, this means projects located within the Tacoma Downtown and Mall Subareas. In other areas of the City, this process is typically addressed through the SEPA review process.

HOW IT WORKS

The Tacoma Municipal Code outlines three general levels of review, although the latter steps may not be required if it is determined that there is no potential for impact to historic or cultural resources.

For projects within the Downtown and Mall Subareas

All applications for a permit must indicate whether the subject property is within 500 feet of a site known to contain an historic, cultural or archaeological resource(s).

- To find properties on the National Register of Historic Places, Washington Heritage Register or to locate properties that have been determined eligible for the National Register, please visit the Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation at <https://dahp.wa.gov/project-review/wisaard-system>.
- To find properties on the Tacoma Register of Historic Places, please see <https://wspdsmap.cityoftacoma.org/website/Historic/Viewer.htm>.
- Records of known archaeological sites are restricted. Consultation with the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation or a certified archaeologist will be required for large scale projects (such as planned developments). Otherwise, Historic Preservation staff at the City may be able to confirm presence or absence of archaeological sites within the project vicinity.

- If there are no known historically listed sites within 500 feet of the subject property, a letter to the Historic Preservation Officer should be submitted with the development stating so, along with the research methods used and resources consulted.

Cultural Site Assessment

If the property is determined to be within 500 feet of a site known to contain historic, cultural, or archaeological resources, the City shall require a cultural resource site assessment.

The intent of the site assessment is to identify potentially affected historic/culturally significant properties near the project area, and to provide a general assessment of the potential for impacts to these properties.

- a. The Cultural Resource Assessment shall catalog known significant historic or cultural sites in the vicinity (500 feet) of the proposed project, and assess whether there is any probable impacts to those sites resulting from the development activity. This assessment shall include photographs and a brief description of significant sites, a description of anticipated impacts (if any) and a map showing locations relative to the proposed development.
- b. Where there is a large planned development that may affect numerous historically significant properties, and for any project that includes demolitions of structures 50 years of age or older, the documentation of buildings must be conducted in accordance with Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation guidelines for survey and site reporting. Such documentation must include an assessment of the historic significance or lack thereof, and the basis for this assessment.
- c. Demolition of historically significant structures or the disturbance of documented archaeological sites will automatically require the preparation of a Cultural Resource Management Plan (see below).
- d. The provisions of this section may be waived if the Director determines that the proposed development activities do not include any ground disturbing activities (for areas within 500 feet of a known archaeological site) and/or will not impact a known historic, cultural or archaeological site. Applicants may request this in a written correspondence stating the



Note: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.

The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.

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basis for such a waiver, including the resources consulted and research conducted.

- e. The fee for the services of the professional archaeologist or historic preservation professional shall be paid by the landowner or responsible party, if needed.

If the cultural resource site assessment identifies the presence of significant historic or archaeological resources for which there is an anticipated adverse effect resulting from the proposed development activity, a Cultural Resource Management Plan ("CRMP") shall be prepared by a professional archaeologist or historic preservation professional paid by the landowner or responsible party.

Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP)

The CRMP is intended to provide documentation that allows a thorough assessment of the anticipated adverse impacts to historic and culturally significant properties resulting from development activities within the Downtown and Mall Subareas. The CRMP is required by code when there are known significant properties that are likely to be adversely impacted. In the preparation of a CRMP, applicant must solicit comments from the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and the Puyallup Tribe. Comments received shall be incorporated into the conclusions and recommended conditions of the CRMP to the maximum extent practicable.

The CRMP has four basic components:

- a. Definition of the project scope and area ("Area of Potential Effect" or "APE"),
- b. Inventory and assessment of all historically and culturally significant/designated properties within the APE,
- c. Assessment of the probable impacts
- d. Discussion of means to avoid or mitigate the probable impacts.

By code, the CRMP shall be prepared by a qualified cultural resources consultant, as defined by the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. The plan's required elements are defined in TMC 13.12.570, and applicants who believe that they may be required to submit a CRMP are encouraged to contact the Historic Preservation Office for additional information.

How is the CRMP used?

The recommendations and conclusions of the CRMP shall be used to assist the Director in making final administrative decisions concerning the presence and extent of historic/archaeological resources and appropriate mitigating measures. The Director shall consult with the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and the Puyallup Tribe prior to approval of the CRMP.

The Director may reject or request revision of the conclusions reached in a CRMP when the Director can demonstrate that the assessment is inaccurate or does not fully address the historic/archaeological resource management concerns involved.

UNANTICIPATED DISCOVERY PLANS (UDP)

All permit applications for projects that disturb the ground shall prepare a plan for the possible unanticipated discovery of historic, cultural or archaeological resources, including a point of contact, procedure for stop-work notification, and for notification of appropriate agencies. The City can provide examples of UDPs.

STAFF CONTACTS

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